



# 2024



## WEDA FALL BEST PRACTICES CONFERENCE

### POWERING WISCONSIN'S GROWTH



SEPTEMBER 25 - 27, 2024 | THE LISMORE, EAU CLAIRE, WI

**DRAFT 7.24.24**

Wednesday, Sept. 25, 2024	
9:00 AM – 1:00 PM	<b>WEDA Academy Workshop (OPTIONAL PROGRAM)</b>
12 Noon – 1:00 PM	<b>Wisconsin Women in Economic Development Luncheon – The Lismore Hotel</b> We are pleased to announce our inaugural event at the Fall Best Practices Conference. Join us for a networking and roundtable luncheon on <b>Wednesday, September 25, 2024, at noon at The Lismore Hotel in Eau Claire.</b> This event is intended for women in economic development in Wisconsin, but all are welcome. It provides an excellent opportunity to connect with peers, discuss common challenges, and share strategies for success. We aim to create a supportive space to uplift women in our field. We look forward to your participation and the beginning of many enriching and empowering conversations. <b>\$10/person</b>
1:00 – 6:30 PM  Tour starts from hotel lobby at 1:15 pm.	<b>Eau Claire Site Visit(s) (OPTIONAL PROGRAM - \$20/p) Limited to 50 persons</b> Board the bus and join us on this tour of the Eau Claire area highlighting developments that have a major role in the growth of Eau Claire. A small fee will be charged to cover the cost of the bus. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1:30 pm - Silver Spring Foods – Farm Site</li> <li>• 3:15 pm - Menomonie Market Food Coop</li> <li>• 4:00 pm - Sonnentag Event Center</li> <li>• 5:00 pm - Conference Reception hosted by Miron Construction Co. (See conference website.)</li> <li>• 6:30 pm - Return to The Lismore via bus</li> </ul> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p>  <p><i>Adding Value to Everything We Do</i></p>
5:00 – 6:30 PM	<b>WEDA Fall Best Practices Conference Opening Reception</b> <b>Hosted by Miron Construction Co.</b> Join us at Miron’s new office building located at: 2124 125 <sup>th</sup> Street, Lake Hallie, WI...Just a short drive from downtown Eau Claire.  <p><b>Building Excellence</b></p>
8:00 – 10:00 PM	<b>Hospitality Suite at The Lismore</b> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p>  <p><b>GREENFIRE</b> BUILDERS OF THE FUTURE</p>



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	<b>Thursday, Sept. 26, 2024</b>	
<b>7:30 AM</b>	<b>Registration / Continental Breakfast / Exhibits Open</b>	<i>Exhibit Hall Sponsor:</i> 
<b>8:30 AM</b>	<b>Welcome to Eau Claire!</b> <i>Emily Berge, President, Eau Claire City Council</i>	
<b>8:35 – 9:15 AM</b>	<b>Keynote Address</b> <b>Jason Anderson,</b> <i>Executive Director, Pablo Center at the Confluence, Eau Claire, WI</i> <p>Jason Anderson has more than 20 years of creative asset management, live event/festival design, live event systems design, project management, tour management and peer-to-peer training &amp; development for higher education, corporations, non-profit organizations and foundations. Strengths include strategic planning, the ability to think collaboratively and creatively, strong organizational - training and facilitation skills, an excellent team player and extensive experience working in production management as well as higher education.</p> <p>In addition to his role as the Executive Director of Pablo Center at the Confluence, he is the Production Director of the Boston Calling Music Festival. <a href="http://www.pablocenter.org">www.pablocenter.org</a> He holds a BFA from UW-Stevens Point in Technical Theatre and Design and an MFA in Lighting Design from Northern Illinois University.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sponsored by:</i> </p>	
<b>9:15 – 10:00 AM</b>	<b>Collaborative Catalysts: Efficient Delivery Using Public-Private Partnerships to Maximize Results of Economic Development with Public Works Projects</b> This presentation will focus on the important role the Department of Public Works can have in local economic development, leveraging Public Private partnerships, public funding, and a thoughtful technical approach to community design and infrastructure implementation.	
	<b>Moderator:</b> <b>Speakers:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>John Edlebeck, PE, The Sigma Group, Inc.</b></li> </ul>	<i>Sponsored by:</i> 




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<p>10:00 – 10:30 AM</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Jonathan Cameron, <i>Ehlers Inc.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>WEDA EXPO &amp; NETWORKING BREAK</b></p> <p><i>Morning Break Sponsor:</i></p>  <p><i>Exhibit Hall Sponsor:</i></p> 
<p>10:30 – 11:15 AM</p>	<p><b>Effective Use of AI in the Workplace</b></p> <p>Explore how AI and automation can translate into tangible business value for economic growth. Through real-world examples and practical insights, participants will gain an understanding of how technology applications can significantly influence growth strategies, business operations, customer and employee engagement and financial performance. Explore the vast opportunities to discover hidden business values.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Speaker: Mo Abuali, Ph.D., Director – Digital Strategy, WIPFLI</b></p>
<p>11:15 AM – 12 Noon</p>	<p><b>Use Lean to Focus and Drive Results</b></p> <p>Ever have a problem that never seems to get solved or a committee that doesn't gain traction to solve the problem for which it was created? Attend this session to learn what Lean is, how to apply Lean principles and techniques to clarify your goal(s), determine what the real problem you are trying to solve is, get promises for deliverables from team members and hold people accountable for their commitments in order to produce better results with less effort.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Karen Newhouse, <i>Director, Lean Services, Miron Construction</i></li> <li>Jack Zwicker, <i>VP Business Development, Miron Construction</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 
<p>12 Noon – 1:15 PM</p>	<p><b>Community Economic Development Awards Luncheon</b></p> <p><b>Introduction By:</b></p> <p><b>Guest Emcee:</b></p> <p><b>CEDA AWARD SPONSORS:</b></p>     <p><b>CEDA PARTNER:</b></p>  <p><b>CEDA PROGRAM SPONSORS:</b></p>  <div data-bbox="1295 1539 1593 1661" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; transform: rotate(-2deg);"> <p>EARLY BIRD REGISTRATION DRAWING!</p> </div>



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<p>1:15 – 2:00 PM</p>	<p><b>Revitalizing Wisconsin Communities: Exploring the Impact of Brownfield Projects on Economic Development and Resilience</b></p> <p>Discover the transformative impact of brownfield revitalization on Wisconsin communities in this presentation. Learn how the EPA Brownfield Program supports community-wide reuse and redevelopment efforts, enabling successful brownfield initiatives that help build sustainable and vibrant economies. Through local and national case studies, explore how brownfield redevelopment fosters entrepreneurship, job creation, and resilience. Gain insights into the critical role of transportation planning in maximizing the economic and mobility benefits from brownfield projects.</p> <p>Attendees will leave with actionable knowledge to leverage brownfield initiatives as catalysts for sustainable economic development and community resilience in Wisconsin.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Melissa Hunt</b>, <i>Planning &amp; Economic Development Professional, Ayres Associates</i></li> <li>• <b>Keely Campbell</b>, <i>Manager-Development Services Midwest, Ayres Associates</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sponsored by:</i></p>
<p>2:00 -2:35 PM</p> <p>2:00 – 2:35 PM</p>	<p><b>HIGH IMPACT BREAKOUT SESSIONS - 30 minutes each</b></p> <p><b>1. Business Retention, Succession Planning and Employee Ownership</b></p> <p>Small businesses are closing. Businesses founded in our Wisconsin communities are not being retained. Succession planning is a critical economic development activity, but succession planning alone is not a guarantee of business retention in your community. How a business owner exits is a core piece of a Business Retention program. An important piece that is very often missed. Learn about key succession planning elements and how using employee ownership (EO) such as ESOPs, is a key win-win succession program for the owner, employees, and community. Hear first-hand from a company retained in their community via employee ownership.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Ryan Kauth</b>, <i>Executive Director, WI Center for Employee Ownership</i></li> <li>• <b>Jean Bergner</b>, <i>Advocacy Committee Chair, WI Chapter of ESOP Association</i></li> <li>• <b>Timm Boettcher</b>, <i>CEO, RealtyWorks</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> <p><b>2. Bridging the Divide: Optimizing Hiring Practices for Military Talent</b></p> <p>Explore strategies to enhance your recruitment process and effectively attract military veterans. This session tackles common barriers, such as unclear job descriptions, the translation of military skills to civilian roles and</p>






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	<p>the lack of visible career progression, offering actionable solutions to make your organization a preferred choice for veteran applicants.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b>  <b>Speaker:</b> <i>Zach Zabel, Vice President, Wisconsin Veterans Chamber of Commerce</i></p>
<p>2:35 – 3:00 PM</p>	<p><b>WEDA EXPO &amp; NETWORKING BREAK</b></p> <p><i>Exhibit Hall Sponsor:</i>  <i>Afternoon Break Sponsor:</i> </p>
<p>3:00 – 3:35 PM</p> <p>3:00 – 3:35 PM</p>	<p><b>HIGH IMPACT BREAKOUT SESSIONS – 30 minutes each</b></p> <p><b>1. Crisis Communication &amp; Media Training</b>          Leadership, within any organization, is typically the public-facing figure in any crisis. But, from a behind the scenes perspective, are you prepared? Do you have the key people in place to handle all aspects of a crisis? With a 24/7 news cycle, it's more important than ever to be prepared for a crisis. Hear from Red Shoes Inc., a full-service marketing and communications firm, that specializes in crisis communication planning and response.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b>  <b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Katie Much</b>, <i>Strategic Communication Specialist, Red Shoes, Inc.</i></li> <li>• <b>Jenni Thurlow</b>, <i>Media Coordinator, Red Shoes, Inc.</i></li> </ul> <p><b>2. Best Practices for Responding to Business Attraction RFI's</b>          Don't panic—prepare! The session will share WEDC's process working with site selectors, companies, and Regional EDOs on RFIs. We will cover best practices for communities when responding to RFIs, with helpful do's, don'ts, and examples of well-completed submissions.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b>  <b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sarah Bownds</b>, <i>Business Attraction Manager, WEDC</i></li> <li>• <b>Heather Smith</b>, <i>Senior Director of Business &amp; Investment Attraction, WEDC</i></li> <li>• <b>Deborah Reinbold</b>, <i>President of Thrive Economic Development, Jefferson County</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sponsored by:</i> </p>





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<p><b>3:45 - 4:30 PM</b></p>	<p><b>Cultivating Rural Entrepreneurship: Building an Inclusive Entrepreneurial Eco-System</b></p> <p>This session will focus on building ecosystems to support and grow entrepreneur-led economic development in rural Wisconsin. Community and economic development professionals from UW-Madison Extension will discuss current initiatives including Maximizing Success, Rural Wisconsin Entrepreneurship Initiative (RWEI) and the new Rural Entrepreneurial Venture (REV) program, designed to provide communities with the framework and education needed to engage and support diverse entrepreneurs. Create new strategies to grow your e-led economic development efforts or assess your current strategies to ensure they support business growth in your community.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Lisa Taylor</b>, <i>Community Economic Development Specialist, UW-Madison Division of Extension</i></li> <li>• <b>Mia Ljung</b>, <i>Community Development Educator, UW-Madison Division of Extension</i></li> <li>• <b>Charlotte Peters</b>, <i>Community Development Educator, UW-Madison Division of Extension</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SPEEDY JAM SESSION</b> 3:45– 4:05 PM   Exhibit Hall</p> <p><b>Revive and Thrive: Unlocking Funding and Technical Assistance for Transforming Abandoned and Underutilized Properties</b></p> <p>Planning for redevelopment begins with identifying vacant, underutilized, or contaminated properties, known as brownfields. This session will guide you to understanding some potential liabilities that create barriers to future redevelopment. Discover funding opportunities and free services and tools available to navigate these challenges and avoid unnecessary risks. Learn how to transform brownfields into vibrant, productive spaces that contribute to community growth and sustainability.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Speaker: Roxanne Anderson</b>, <i>Regional Director - EPA Region 5, University of Kansas TAB</i></p>
<p><b>5:00 – 6:30 pm</b></p>	<p><b>Networking Reception – Pablo Center at the Confluence</b></p> <p>The Pablo Center is located at 128 Graham Avenue – a short walk from the hotel!</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> <div style="text-align: right;">  </div>	
<p><b>7:00 – 9:00 PM</b></p>	<p><b>DINE-Arounds in Downtown Eau Claire</b></p>	
<p><b>8:30 – 10:30 PM</b></p>	<p><b>Hospitality Suite at The Lismore</b></p>	




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	<p><i>Open to all attendees!</i></p> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i>  <b>GREENFIRE</b> BUILDERS OF THE FUTURE</p>
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Friday, September 27, 2024	
7:00 AM	<p>F.I.R.E. Breakfast Buffet   Exhibits Open till 10 AM</p> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i> </p>
8:00 AM (20 min.)	<p><b>Opening Address</b> Secretary Missy Hughes, Wisconsin Economic Development Corporation</p> 
8:20 AM (40 min.)	<p><b>FRIDAY KEYNOTE ADDRESS</b> <b>Lindsey Everson</b> <i>General Manager, Molson Coors Beverage Company, Chippewa Falls, WI</i></p> <p>Lindsey serves as the General Manager with Molson Coors. She focuses on brands such as Leinenkugel's where she develops retail and guest experience strategies to engage and connect fans of the brands through events and tours merchandise and, of course, beer! This role has allowed her to build on her passions to create amazing and memorable experiences for all guests at the breweries, tap rooms and historical locations.</p> <p>Lindsey holds degrees in International Business, Economics and Spanish from the College of Saint Scholastica in Duluth, Minnesota. She currently is a guest lecturer for Marketing at the University of Wisconsin, Eau Claire and participates as a Keynote Speaker for the American Marketing Association and Young Professionals.</p>
9:00 AM	<p><b>WEDI Update</b> <i>Title and Description coming</i></p>







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<p><b>9:45 AM</b></p>	<p><b>WEDA EXPO &amp; NETWORKING BREAK</b></p> <p><i>Exhibit Hall Sponsor:</i></p>  <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 
<p><b>10:00 AM</b></p>	<p><b>Development Opportunities: Challenges and Tools to Work with Local Governments</b></p> <p>The past few years have brought intense fluctuations to the commercial real estate market. Many communities simultaneously face increasingly limited housing options. What are some options communities can consider to address these issues? This session will discuss development strategies, including tax incremental financing, community planning, and workforce housing. They will address how the recent changes under 2023 Wisconsin Act 16 provide communities an opportunity to reexamine their zoning ordinances and take advantage of new residential housing opportunities.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Christopher R. Smith</b>, <i>Shareholder, Co-Chair, Real Estate Section, von Briesen &amp; Roper, s.c.</i></li> <li>• <b>Brion T. Winters</b>, <i>Shareholder, Co-Chair, Real Estate Section, von Briesen &amp; Roper, s.c.</i></li> <li>• <b>Samuel A. Schultz</b>, <i>Land Use &amp; Development Advisor, von Briesen &amp; Roper, s.c.</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 
<p><b>10:40 AM</b></p>	<p><b>Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation</b></p> <p>This session will highlight the work of the Wisconsin Department of Tourism's Outdoor Recreation Office whose mission is, "To support and uplift the outdoor recreation industry and its partners for the economic health and overall well-being of the state and its residents." The session will also highlight a multi-county workgroup which is seeking to make western Wisconsin a national draw for outdoor recreation.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <p><b>Speakers:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dave Carlson</b>, <i>Manager, Economic Development &amp; Tourism, Trempealeau Co.</i></li> <li>• <b>Cassie Mordini</b>, <i>Director, WI Office of Outdoor Recreation</i></li> <li>• <b>Kennedy Domerchie</b>, <i>Outdoors Development Manager, Visit Eau Claire</i></li> <li>• <b>Mike Golat</b>, <i>City Administrator, Altoona, WI</i></li> <li>• <b>Kate Felton</b>, <i>Owner, Eau Claire Outdoors</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 






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<p><b>11:20 AM</b></p>	<p><b>Activating Your Rural Entrepreneurial Eco-System</b></p> <p>Discover innovative strategies and success stories that harness the power of local entrepreneurship to drive sustainable growth and prosperity. From fostering startup ecosystems to leveraging digital technologies, learn how rural communities can cultivate the entrepreneurial spirit. Join us for a deep dive into actionable insights and collaborative opportunities that empower rural entrepreneurs and ignite economic transformation.</p> <p><b>Moderator:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Speaker: Raina Lyman</b>, <i>Director of Small Business &amp; Entrepreneurship, Envision Greater Fond du Lac</i></li> </ul> <p style="text-align: right;"><i>Sponsored by:</i></p> 
<p><b>12 Noon</b></p>	<p><b>CONFERENCE CONCLUDES</b></p>

**SUPPORTING SPONSORS:**



**TAB**  
 Technical Assistance  
 to Brownfields

**WISCONSIN**  
 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



**CENTERGY**  
 Central WI Alliance for  
 Economic Development